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DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Fish and Wildlife Service

[FWS–HQ–MB–2016–N218]

[91400–5110–0000]; [91400–9410–0000]

Multistate Conservation Grant Program; Fiscal Year 2016 Priority List and Approval for Award of the Conservation Projects

AGENCY: Fish and Wildlife Service, Interior.

ACTION: Notice of receipt of priority list and approval of projects.

SUMMARY: We, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service), announce the Fiscal Year (FY) 2016 priority list of wildlife and sport fish conservation projects from the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (AFWA). As required by the Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration Programs Improvement Act of 2000, AFWA submits a list of projects to us each year to consider for funding under the Multistate Conservation Grant Program. We reviewed the list and have awarded all the grants from the list.

ADDRESSES: John C. Stremple, Multistate Conservation Grants Program Coordinator; Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration Program; U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service; 5275 Leesburg Pike; MS: WSFR; Falls Church, VA 22041–3808.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: John C. Stremple, (703) 358–2156 (phone) or John_Stremple@fws.gov (email).

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The Fish and Wildlife Programs Improvement and National Wildlife Refuge System Centennial Act of 2000 (Improvement Act, Pub. L. 106-408) amended the Pittman-Robertson Wildlife Restoration Act (16 U.S.C. 669 *et seq.*) and the Dingell-Johnson Sport Fish Restoration Act (16 U.S.C. 777 *et seq.*) and established the Multistate Conservation Grant Program. The Improvement Act authorizes us to award grants of up to \$3 million annually from funds available under each of the restoration acts, for a total of up to \$6 million annually. Projects can be funded from both funds depending on the project activities. We may award grants to projects from a list of priority projects recommended to us by the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies. The Service Director, exercising the authority of the Secretary of the Interior, need not fund all projects on the list, but all projects funded must be on the list.

The Improvement Act provides that funding for Multistate grants is available in the year it is appropriated and for the following year. Total funding for the FY 2016 Multistate Conservation grants is in excess of \$6 million due to funding that has been carried over from FY 2015, as well as the availability of funding that had previously been sequestered.

Grantees under this program may use funds for sport fisheries and wildlife management and research projects, boating access development, hunter safety and education, aquatic education, fish and wildlife habitat improvements, and other purposes consistent with the enabling legislation.

To be eligible for funding, a project must benefit fish and/or wildlife conservation for at least 26 States, for a majority of the States in any one Service Region, or for one of the regional associations of State fish and wildlife agencies. We may award grants to a State, a group of

States, or one or more nongovernmental organizations. For the purpose of carrying out the National Survey of Fishing, Hunting, and Wildlife-Associated Recreation, we may award grants to the Service, if requested by AFWA, or to a State or a group of States. Also, AFWA requires all project proposals to address its National Conservation Needs, which AFWA announces annually at the same time it requests proposals. Further, applicants must provide certification that no activities conducted under a Multistate Conservation Grant will promote or encourage opposition to regulated hunting or trapping of wildlife, or to regulated angling or taking of fish.

AFWA committees and interested nongovernmental organizations that represent conservation organizations, sportsmen's and women's organizations, and industries that support or promote fishing, hunting, trapping, recreational shooting, bowhunting, or archery review and rank eligible project proposals. AFWA's Committee on National Grants recommends a final list of priority projects to the directors of the State fish and wildlife agencies for their approval by majority vote. By statute, AFWA then transmits the final approved list to the Service for funding under the Multistate Conservation Grant program by October 1 of the fiscal year. This year, AFWA sent us a list of 18 projects that they recommended for funding. We awarded all of the recommended projects for FY 2016. The list follows:

**Multistate Conservation Grant Program
FY 2016 Projects**

<u>ID</u>	<u>Title</u>	<u>Submitter</u>	<u>PR Funding¹</u>	<u>DJ Funding²</u>	<u>Total 2015 Grant</u>
1	State Fish & Wildlife Agency Technical Workgroup for the 2016 National Survey	AFWA	\$3,360	\$3,360	\$6,720
2	State Fish and Wildlife Agency Administration and Coordination	AFWA	\$77,386.63	\$77,386.63	\$154,773.26
3	Development of a National Outreach Strategy	AFWA	\$74,925	\$74,925	\$149,850

4	Increasing Effectiveness of State Wildlife Agencies Through Leadership & Professional Development	AFWA	\$15,000	\$15,000	\$30,000
5	Management Assistance Team (MAT) and the National Conservation Leadership Institute	AFWA	\$118,568	\$118,568	\$237,136
6	State Fish & Wildlife Agency Director Travel Administration and Coordination	AFWA	\$48,056.25	\$48,056.25	\$96,112.50
7	Expansion & Implementation of the North American Conservation Education Strategy's Outdoor Recreation Model	AFWA	\$12,485	\$12,485	\$24,970
8	Preserve State Agencies' Authority to Manage Wildlife Resources and Promote Their Interest in the Implementation of International Treaties	AFWA	\$9,000	\$9,000	\$18,000
9	Diversifying Outdoor Education: Translate Explore Bowhunting into Spanish to Reveal an Untapped Market	ATA	\$52,500	\$0	\$52,500
10	AFWA's Legal Strategy: Educating Law Students, Lawyers, Judges, and the Public on State Legal Authority to Manage Fish and Wildlife Resources	AFWA	\$75,000	\$75,000	\$150,000
11	Coordination of the Industry, Federal, and State Agency Coalition	AFWA	\$86,640	\$86,640	\$173,280
12	Recruitment of Hispanic Hunters: Using a Case Studies approach to gain insights into Hispanic values toward wildlife and motivations and participation in hunting	Max McGraw Wildlife Foundation	\$19,675	\$0	\$19,675

13	Crucial Habitat Assessment Tool (CHAT)	WAFWA	\$20,000	\$20,000	\$40,000
14	2016 – Raising Awareness of the WSFR Program and improving industry relations to ensure the long-term stability of the program	WMI	\$60,000	\$60,000	\$120,000
15	Advancing the Objectives of the National Fish Habitat Action Plan through Regional and Collaborative Science and Priority Setting	AFWA/ NFHB	\$0	\$86,000	\$86,000
16	Coordination of the 2016 National Survey Efforts (part A)	FWS	\$128,483	\$128,483	\$256,966
17	50 State Surveys Related to Fishing, Hunting, and Wildlife-Associated Recreation (part B)	Rockville Institute (Westat)	\$1,780,370	\$1,780,370	\$3,560,740
18	National-Level Results for the 2016 Survey of Fishing, Hunting and Wildlife-Associated Recreation (part A)	FWS/U.S. Census Bureau	\$1,272,167	\$1,272,167	\$2,544,334
			\$3,853,615.88	\$3,867,440.88	\$7,721,056.76

¹ PR Funding: Pitman-Robertson Wildlife Restoration funds.

² DJ Funding: Dingell-Johnson Sport Fish Restoration funds.

AFWA: Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies

ATA: Archery Trade Association

NFHB: National Fish Habitat Board

WAFWA: Western Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies

WMI: Wildlife Management Institute

Dated: December 7, 2015.

Stephen Guertin,

Director, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

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